

EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT POLICY



Purpose ----- 1

Definitions ----- 1

The role of the exams officer----- 2

 Storage of assessment materials ----- 2

Planning and preparation for external assessment ----- 2

 Scheduling external assessments ----- 2

 Arranging invigilation ----- 3

 Allocating rooms for external assessment ----- 4

 Notifying learners ----- 4

On the day of external assessment (the role of the invigilator)----- 5

 Before the assessment begins ----- 5

 During the assessment ----- 5

 Ending the assessment----- 6

Purpose

This document outlines the approach YMCA Awards expects its approved training providers (centres) to apply to external assessment and invigilation.

Definitions

We, us, our	YMCA Awards, of YMCA Awards
You, your	YMCA Awards approved training provider (centre), of a YMCA Awards approved training provider (centre)
External assessment	Assessments that are written and marked by YMCA Awards. These are usually multiple-choice exam papers.
Main centre contact	The member of centre staff primarily responsible for communicating with YMCA Awards.
Exams officer	Named person at a YMCA Awards approved training provider (centre) responsible for scheduling external assessments and maintaining the confidentiality of assessment materials.
Invigilator	Member of staff responsible for maintaining the integrity of external assessments by supervising learners during exams.
XAMS	The system our approved training providers use to schedule external assessments and access related assessment materials.
Parnassus	The system our approved training providers use to register learners with us.

The role of the exams officer

As a YMCA Awards approved training provider, you must nominate a member of centre staff to act as exams officer.

The exams officer has responsibility for managing external assessments scheduling on XAMS and maintaining the confidentiality of external assessment materials. **The main centre contact must let YMCA Awards know who the exams officer is (name and email address) and ensure we're updated if this information changes.**

It is best practice for the exams officer not to be involved in the delivery of qualifications as they will have access to live assessment materials. Where this is not possible, **the main centre contact must let us know and outline their procedure for managing the conflict of interest.**

We will provide the exams officer with access and training to use XAMS, our system for managing and delivering external assessments.

Storage of assessment materials

The exams officer must ensure that the confidentiality of assessment materials is maintained and that they are stored securely until destroyed.

The exams officer must never review the content of assessment materials.

Before external assessment

The exams officer must not download assessment materials unless they are prepared to print them. Once assessment materials have been printed, electronic copies must be permanently deleted (i.e. removed from the recycle bin or equivalent).

Printed assessment materials must be locked in a non-portable metal cabinet, within a secure room with restricted access. The room must be kept locked when not occupied by the exams officer.

The confidentiality of the assessment materials must be maintained during transportation. If posting to another location, the exams officer must ensure assessment materials are sent in tamper-proof packaging and that the delivery can be fully tracked.

External assessment materials must not be posted outside of the UK without our written consent.

Following external assessment

The exams officer is responsible for ensuring that:

- all question papers have been accounted for and securely destroyed
- all learners answer sheets are scanned and sent to awards.support@ymca.co.uk for marking as soon as possible following the assessment, along with the attendance list and any additional documentation (e.g. malpractice reports or details of disruption to the assessment)
- learner answer sheets are securely stored until results the results have been received
- the seating plan is retained for 12 months following certification.

The penalty for breaching the confidentiality of assessment materials, resulting in their withdrawal and/or replacement is £15 per replacement question plus £500 for administration.

Planning and preparation for external assessment

Scheduling external assessments

For learners to be scheduled for an external assessment, they must have been registered on Parnassus for a qualification that contains externally assessed units or components. Learners will usually be available to schedule in XAMS within 12 hours of registration being confirmed.

Learners should be scheduled for external assessments as soon as reasonably possible.

Paper-based assessments	Onscreen assessments
<p>Assessment materials can be downloaded up to 10 days before the exam is due to take place.</p> <p>It's best practice to schedule and download the related assessment materials at least one working day before the assessment is due to take place. This ensures that we're available to help if anything goes wrong.</p> <p>Downloaded assessment materials must be printed and deleted straight away.</p>	<p>Learners' login slips can be printed as soon as the schedule has been created.</p> <p>If a learner has been assessed as requiring additional time, you will need to let us know at least 2 working days before the assessment.</p> <p>You or your learners can test the login information in advance of the scheduled assessment. The live assessment will not be available until the scheduled start date and time but a practice assessment will be available in advance.</p> <p>The schedule password printed on the attendance sheet must not be shared with learners until they are ready to begin the assessment under invigilated conditions.</p>

Live assessment materials must not be used for practice or mock assessments.

[How to schedule external assessments](#)

Arranging invigilation

You need to ensure that you have sufficient, suitably qualified resource to oversee scheduled external assessments. Invigilators are responsible for upholding the integrity of the external assessment by ensuring the procedures outlined in this document are followed.

There must be at least one invigilator for every 30 learners. If only one invigilator is used, they must be able to call for assistance without disturbing learners or leaving them unattended.

Learners scheduled to use a reader or writer must be allocated a separate room to other learners completing the assessment at the same time.

Invigilators must not include:

- anyone related to a learner completing the assessment
- anyone responsible for supporting a learner with reasonable assessment adjustments during the assessment.

It is best practice to ensure that tutors involved in the preparing the learners for assessment are not used as invigilators. Where this is not possible, **the main centre contact must let us know and outline their procedure for managing the conflict of interest.**

Using technology to invigilate external assessments

Our preferred approach to invigilation is traditional face-to-face intervention. However, we recognise that the principles of invigilation can be achieved for on-screen assessment with robust centre procedures and technology platforms that:

- maintain the confidentiality of assessment materials
- allow verification of learners' identities
- verify the appropriateness of the assessment environment for the duration of the assessment
- simultaneously monitor the learner and the computer screen

If you would like to use technology to invigilate assessments, **you must get written confirmation that we're happy with your approach before you proceed.**

The approval process for using technology to invigilate external assessments can take several months.

Allocating rooms for external assessment

Our external assessments last from 15 to 60 minutes. Learners should be provided an appropriate level of comfort during the assessment and therefore the rooms you allocate should:

- be accessible to all learners
- have appropriate lighting, heating and ventilation
- have appropriate seating for the duration of the assessment
- be located away from distracting noise

Unless there are partitions between desks, learners must be seated at least 1.2 metres apart.

Where learners are sitting on-screen assessments, you should ensure that there is at least one spare work station/computer for every 10 learners scheduled.

Any learners requiring a reader or writer must be allocated a separate room where they can be supported without disrupting the assessment of others.

You may use alternative venues from your usual delivery address for external assessment, providing you let us know in advance. Assessments must still be invigilated as outlined in [On the day of external assessment/The role of the invigilator](#).

YMCA Awards is committed to maintaining the integrity of external assessment and may visit test sites unannounced to monitor arrangements.

Notifying learners

As soon as possible after the external assessment has been scheduled, you should confirm the assessment date and venue to learners. You must also ensure that learners are aware of their responsibilities before, during and after external assessments.

Before the assessment, learners must:

- arrive 15 minutes before the scheduled start time for the assessment
- bring photographic ID (usually a passport or driving license)
- bring at least one pen and a traditional calculator (if allowed for the assessment)
- switch off all mobile phones before the assessment begins
- leave anything not required for the assessment (including mobile phones and other smart devices) in the area designated by the invigilator. This will be away from where learners are seated and so learners should be advised not to bring valuables to the assessment.
- ensure that their name is printed on both the cover of the assessment paper and answer sheet they've been provided or confirm their personal information is correct once logged in to their onscreen assessment account
- carefully read the instructions printed on the front of the assessment paper or displayed onscreen

During the assessment, learners must:

- follow any instructions given by the invigilator, on the cover the assessment paper or in the introduction page of onscreen assessments
- sign the bottom of their answer sheet (paper-based assessments only)
- **not** attempt to communicate with other learners in any way

Following the assessment, learners must:

- leave all assessment materials (question papers, answer sheets and any notes made) in the assessment room
- **not** make written notes on the content of the assessment paper

Learners must not leave the assessment room until the end of the assessment, or at least 30 minutes after the scheduled start time (whichever is shorter). Once they have left, learners will not be allowed to re-enter the assessment room. If learners choose to leave the assessment room early, they must do so as quietly as possible if other learners are still working.

Learners should be aware that failure to follow our external assessment rules or instructions provided on the assessment cover sheet/intro page may result in us invalidating their result.

On the day of external assessment (the role of the invigilator)

The exams officer should ensure that the invigilator is provided access to the assessment materials on the day of the assessment.

The invigilator must not review the content of the assessment materials or learners' responses.

Before the assessment begins

Invigilators must ensure:

- the room has been set up correctly with a sign outside indicating an assessment is in progress and a clock clearly visible showing the correct time
- that any learning materials or displays that could assist learners in the assessment have been covered or removed
- the seating plan is appropriate
- they're aware of any reasonable assessment adjustments (e.g. extra time)
- they check learners' photographic ID (usually a passport or driving license) before allowing them access to the assessment room
- any personal items not required for the assessment (including switched off mobile phones and other smart devices) are out of reach of learners

Once learners have been seated, invigilators must:

1. inform learners they are now subject to the rules of the assessment
2. remind learners they must not attempt to communicate with any other learners until they leave the assessment room
3. check that learners have all the necessary materials
4. ensure learners are clear on how to complete their answer sheets and what to do if they make an error
5. remind learners to sign their theory paper answer sheets (we will not be able to mark the assessment if this isn't completed)
6. provide learners with their personalised assessment paper and answer sheet (paper-based assessments) or personal login details (on-screen assessments)
7. check that learners have the correct assessment materials
8. announce clearly when learners can begin and specify the time allowed
9. write start and finish times so that they are clearly visible to all learners
10. check and complete the learner register

Failure to comply with these assessment rules may invalidate learners' results.

During the assessment

Invigilators must:

- supervise learners throughout the whole assessment
- remain alert, observing learners throughout the assessment
- **not** undertake any other activities whilst invigilating
- **alert learners when they have between 5 and 10 minutes remaining**

For on-screen external assessments, the invigilator must also:

- ensure learners only have one web browser window open
- ensure learners do not navigate away from the assessment
- intermittently check what is on each learner's screen

Learners arriving late to the assessment

Learner arriving late may be allowed to sit the assessment, at the invigilator/centre's discretion, providing:

- they arrive within 15 minutes of the scheduled start time
- it doesn't compromise the invigilation of other learners

If a late arriving learner sits the assessment, the invigilators will need to ensure the details and circumstances are recorded for External Quality Assurance.

Learners finishing the assessment early

Learners can be allowed to leave the assessment room from 30 minutes after the scheduled start time, provided:

- this doesn't interfere with other learners' assessments
- all assessment materials and notes are passed to an invigilator
- the invigilator confirms that the answer sheet has been signed by the learner before the learner leaves.

Once a learner has left the assessment room, they cannot re-enter.

Misconduct

Invigilators must take steps to stop any inappropriate behaviour. If the incident is serious, an invigilator must collect the learner's assessment materials and instruct them to leave.

Invigilators must report any misconduct to the main centre contact detailing:

- the time and nature of the incident
- the persons involved and witness statements
- considerations allowed for other learners affected.

YMCA Awards must be alerted of all incidents of misconduct as soon as possible after the assessment.

Disruptions to external assessment

If an external assessment is interrupted by circumstances beyond learners' control (e.g. fire alarm), the invigilators must ensure:

- the assessment room is evacuated safely
- all assessment materials are left on learners' desks
- assessment conditions are maintained where ever possible

Providing learners are closely supervised and assessment conditions are maintained, learners can be allowed to resume the assessment and given the full time once the disruption is resolved.

We must be informed of all disruptions to assessments as soon as possible following the incident.

Ending the assessment

At the end of the assessment time, invigilators must:

- tell learners to stop
- collect all assessment materials and notes
- confirm that learners have signed their answer sheets before they leave the assessment room
- place the answer sheets in the order on the schedule register
- sign each answer sheet to confirm authenticity
- ensure all assessment materials and paper work is securely passed to the exams officer (see [Storage of assessment materials](#)).

We cannot release results for any answer sheet that is missing a learner or invigilator signature.